

Dear LMSD Families,

We are reaching out to share information about electronic cigarettes/vaping (also known as Juuling) and their associated potential health effects. You have likely heard about recent cases of serious lung injury and deaths. A list of resources is included at the bottom of this letter.

**What is Vaping/Juuling?** Electronic cigarettes are battery-operated devices that heat a liquid into vapors, which are inhaled (or “vaped”) by the user. The liquid can be anything from a flavored water-type mixture to liquid nicotine to THC (the principal active ingredient in marijuana). Flavored nicotine pods are very popular. Fruit, menthol and mint flavors are the most popular, with more than 60% of teens who vaped saying they used them. Each pod may contain high amounts of nicotine. Juuling is a discreet form of vaping that has become increasingly common. The Juul device looks like a USB flash drive, or thumb drive, so unnoticeable that its use can occur in public places, often in front of unsuspecting adults. There are a variety of other brand name devices in addition to Juul that may look like flash drives, pens and other common items. Even though it is illegal to sell vaping devices and products to minors, they are often obtained online, in gas stations, convenience stores and vape shops. Many states have enacted or plan to enact legislation addressing sale of vape products to youth.

**Why should I be concerned?** The use of e-cigarettes and vaping/Juuling has increased rapidly in recent years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)’s annual National Youth Tobacco Survey, reported use among teens has risen from 11.7 % in 2017 to 27.5 % of high school students reporting e-cigarette use in a 30-day period. Vaping of nicotine by teens is very likely to lead to nicotine addiction. Recently, cases of serious lung injuries and deaths have been linked to vaping.

**What are the health effects of vaping?** Vaping is still too new to know its long-term health effects. Testing of some e-cigarettes has shown that the vapor contains cancer-causing and toxic chemicals. Although it is believed that vaping nicotine may be an option for adult cigarette smokers trying to quit smoking cigarettes gradually, it is not a safe option for adolescents as they may quickly become addicted to nicotine. Additionally, the CDC and other health agencies are investigating a multi-state outbreak of lung injuries and deaths associated with the use of e-cigarette or vaping products. As of October 22, 2019, there have been 1604 cases of vaping-related lung injury in the US, resulting in 34 deaths. According to the CDC, the cause or causes of the lung injuries has not been identified and the only commonality is that patients report the use of e-cigarette or vaping products, with most of the samples containing THC. No single compound or ingredient has emerged as the causal agent. Information about this serious health condition related to vaping can be found at the CDC website: [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html)

Again, the health effects from repeated exposure are not known. One thing we do know is that nicotine, in any form, is highly addictive. It activates the same brain addiction pathways as other addictive substances. We also know that the adolescent brain is more vulnerable to the effects of any substance including potential addiction. Even the non-nicotine vaping products may contain ingredients that are dangerous to health and should not be considered safe.



***What should we be looking for?*** A Juul (pictured here) can be mistaken for a USB device. It can be accessed easily. The Juul vaporizer goes easily undetected as the smoke and smell linger for only seconds. The pods contain many different flavors such as crème brulee, fruit medley, and cool mint which can be appealing to adolescents. The smell can be confused for a light perfume. There are many other brands of these devices. Please see resources for descriptions and images of other devices.

***What can you do?*** Information about substances, their abuse and addiction is included in health curriculum in selected grades and is shared in various ways by teachers, counselors, nurses, coaches and other staff. There are developmentally appropriate educational materials for students about vaping in our schools. In addition to education about prevention and substance abuse, research shows that parental and family conversations can strongly influence thinking and actions in their children. We encourage you to communicate openly and honestly with your children about not only vaping/Juuling, but also about alcohol and other substances. Having an open dialogue with your child about these issues is important. The Partnership for Drug-Free kids offers this information <https://drugfree.org/article/how-to-talk-with-your-kids-about-vaping/>. Additional information and various resources are available on the [counseling page of the Lower Merion School District](#) website. Additionally, information for parents/guardians about substance abuse and vaping has been provided at least twice throughout each school year in our Parent Education Series. Most recently evening programs were provided for parents of students in grades K-12 in September and October.

Much like cigarettes and tobacco products, vaping devices, Juuls, and other electronic cigarettes as well as related paraphernalia (such as pods) are not permitted on school property. Students with them in their possession, or observed using them on school grounds, will be subject to disciplinary action. A referral to the school START (Student Assistance Referral Team) may also be indicated.

And, if you have concerns that your child may have a nicotine addiction or if you have any questions about substance abuse and your child, please contact the Counseling office at your child's school, the School Nurse or the Administrator.

In good health,

Terry Quinlan Clampffer MEd, RN, CSN  
Lead Supervisor of School Health and Student Safety  
Lower Merion School District

**Additional Resources and Articles:**

<https://www.montcopa.org/3271/Youth-Vaping-Prevention-Resources>

[https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/22295/Vaping-Toolkit\\_October-2018](https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/22295/Vaping-Toolkit_October-2018)

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/tobacco/Pages/Facts-For-Parents-About-E-Cigarettes-Electronic-Nicotine-Delivery-Systems.aspx>

<https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/print/17921-number-of-teens-vaping-hits-record-high-survey-shows>

[https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/SGR\\_ECig\\_ParentTipsheet\\_508.pdf](https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/SGR_ECig_ParentTipsheet_508.pdf)

<https://www.wired.com/story/juul-pulls-fruit-flavored-pods-us/>

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/lung-illnesses-associated-use-vaping-products>

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/programs/tobacco/Pages/E-cigarettes.aspx>